

The most profitable casino complex is the Mystic Lake Entertainment Center owned and operated by the Shakopee tribe, located just 30 minutes southwest of Minneapolis. Although no tribe in the state makes its earnings public – to the contrary, every tribe guards its revenue figures as highly proprietary – it appears the gross revenue from the Mystic Lake casino alone approximates \$200 million a year. All profits from the operations of the casino go to the tribe.¹⁶

Next, in terms of profitability, are the casinos owned and operated by the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, located just 75 miles north of the Twin Cities. Total gross revenue from the Mille Lacs casinos (Grand Casino Hinckley and Grand Casino Mille Lacs) exceeded \$50 million for the period 1991 to 1994. The Treasure Island casino owned by the Prairie Island Dakota Community, located about 50 miles southeast of St. Paul, and the Fond du Lac casinos round out the top four.¹⁷ Not surprisingly, the Shakopee, Mille Lacs, and Prairie Island tribes – which stood to lose the most should a casino open in nearby Hudson – took the lead among Minnesota tribes in organizing the opposition.

To protect their financial interests, the 11 tribes joined together in 1988 to form the Minnesota Indian Gaming Association.¹⁸ MIGA has been described as a sort of “clearing house” which monitors and informs its members about issues and initiatives affecting their industry.¹⁹

¹⁶The Shakopee also operate a smaller casino, Little Six, with gross revenue approximating \$10 million per year.

¹⁷One of the Fond du Lac tribe’s casinos is located off-reservation in downtown Duluth, Minn., on land taken into trust for the tribe by BIA prior to the enactment of IGRA.

¹⁸The White Earth tribe terminated its membership in MIGA prior to the association’s lobbying activities on the Hudson application.

¹⁹OIC Interview of John McCarthy, Nov. 12, 1998, at 2.